8: Shaw G-5 (ca. 1930)1932 FL11 Luo FL11

were other sons by other wives growing up in the *dala* (*dala*=homestead), a woman would hasten the marriage of her own son lest when it came to paying the bride-price for him cattle might be short on account of the claims of other sons on the family resource. 582 583

Between the permission to marry, however, and marriage itself, there intervened a long chain of events, extending over months, and sometimes even over years. The mere choice of a bride was hedged about with complications and difficulties that often delayed a man's marriage considerably. This choice was, in the first place, limited by the rule that he might not marry any woman related to him, however distantly, either on his father's or on his mother's side of the family. To do this would be to commit incest, and would bring terrible consequences upon the clans and families concerned. If it happened, as it sometimes did, that a man fell in love with a girl without knowing whether he was related to her or not, only to find that she belonged to one side or other of his own family, the discovery put an end immediately to all intercourse between them. If, on the other hand, it could be established that the two were not related, the man would get permission from his father to take her as his wife, and the usual negotiations would be put in hand. It was, however, more usual for a man to leave the choice of his wife to his father, who would select a suitable maiden with regard only to the mutual advantage of the two families concerned. In this case neither the young man nor the girl were regarded as at liberty to refuse the marriage. If the son did so, it was at the cost of his father's deep displeasure; and this was a serious matter in the old days when a man was entirely dependent upon his father, not only for the means to acquire a wife, but for his livelihood in general. So to rebel was unusual. The girl was equally at the mercy of her parents. If she disliked the husband selected for her the only way to escape the match was to run off with another man. But if she did this her lover's father would only pay a very small bride price for her, even as little as a single cow, and not only was she considered to have disgraced herself (not unnaturally in view of the severe pecuniary loss suffered by a family losing a daughter for whom the customary cattle had not been received) but her conduct was regarded as a slur on the whole family. 582 835 584 626 583 577

If a young man was specially anxious to marry a girl who was not debarred by any relationship from becoming his wife, and who returned his affection, he could establish a sole claim to her by sucking her breast before witnesses. After this ceremony she could not be given in marriage to any other man. The existence of such a custom is sufficient proof that among the Luo, as among the more civilised, marriage is often the outcome of a strong personal attraction between a man and a woman. And the fact that tribal custom provides for such a contingency within an otherwise largely utilitarian 584 [201]

11: Hartmann M-5 (ca. 1920)1928 FL11 Luo FL11

844 couple of women who have come to assist her, support her shoulders. If the woman is afraid or weak, somebody generally a strong woman is called to *thuñgo* her, i. e. she puts her mouth close on the mouth of the patient, and blows her breath down the patient's lungs in order to increase the pressure.

No sooner the child is born or one of the assisting women run out of the hut to pull out of the roof a piece of kaffircorn stalk, which is split leaving a sharp edge. This is used to cut the babe's navel after it has been tied off.

[201] If the babe is a boy the Kaffircorn stalk is pulled out of the roof at the side of the fire place of the hut *(Kor amach* = lefthand side facing the hut). If it is a girl, the stalk is pulled out *Kor attung* = the right hand side. Compare: Burial of children (p. 274).

When the afterbirth has come out the mother takes the child on her lap, whilst somebody runs for a drop of fresh sheepmilk — otherwise never consumed — which the child has to drink. Not until the child has swallowed a drop of this will the mother give the child suck.

846 Immediately after the birth of the child the husband orders a goat to be killed for the mother, and the pot is put to boil, for the mother has a ravenous appetite. Now word is sent to her father, who will kill a goat for his wife, who comes to see her daughter, bringing some of the meat and fish along.

For no purpose except nature's call is the mother to leave the hut within 4 days, if the babe is a boy. Then she takes the child outside, and a little patch of hair is shaven above the ears of father, mother and child.

852 After 10 days a bull and a heifer are bled, meat and fish is cooked, *simsim* is pounded and mixed with rendered butter, and the lot of it is to provide a good feed for the inhabitants of the kraal later in the day. On that day the heads of father, mother and child are shaven clean. Then after the woman is smeared [824] with butter and sprinkled with *simsim* seeds, seedballs of a wild plant *(ochok)* are strung on plaited grass *(oganga)* and creeping grass *(modhono)* and [301] hung crosswise over the shoulders and under the armpits of the young mother. In the same way she is ornamented with cowryshells, ordinary beads, beads of smallcircular pieces of ostrich eggs *(rek)* and big iron beads.

[262] When the woman is thus ornamented, a boy, her brother-in-law, is called to hold the child. Now an old woman brings *awinja* (= pounded *simsim* mixed with rendered butter) and cooked *wimbi*. She kneeds a mouthful of the food, making with her thumb a little pit in it *(othwonyo otonge)* which she fills with *awinja*, then she puts it on the end of a wooden ladle, used in stirring the food, 4 times to the mouth of the mother. The 5th time she puts it with the help of the ladle in the mother's mouth, who is not allowed to touch the food with her hand. After she has eaten this one mouthful, another mouthful is given in the same way to her young brother-in-law who holds the child.

Then meat, fish, blood and other food is brought for the inhabitants of the kraal. That night the father and mother of the child sleep again together for the first time after the birth of the child *(iñgado imbo nyathi)*.

If the babe is a girl the woman stays in the hut for 3 days, after which the child is taken outside and a little patch of hair is shaven also above